



Motivations for entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality sector: A social cognitive theory perspective

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ABSTRACT

A critical examination of the literature suggests that further work is needed to understand the relationship between small tourism and hospitality businesses and their external social-economic environments. In particular, the nature of personal and environmental factors influencing tourism entrepreneurship remains unknown. Focusing on one type of small business, guest houses, this study aims to examine entrepreneurs' motivations from a dynamic perspective and explore the nature of personal and environmental factors affecting motivations for entrepreneurship. Taking a qualitative approach, four patterns of change in (or maintenance of) motivation are identified. Guided by social cognitive theory, this study finds that, among the relevant personal factors are cognitive beliefs, intrinsic needs, and demographic factors, while the environmental facilitators include changes in the tourism market, changes within the industry, and changes in setting/location. Finally, a model of small business operators' motivations for engaging in entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality sector is proposed.

1. Introduction

Tourism offers opportunities to start up various types of business, especially small or microbusinesses, which appeal to both sole proprietors and families. Researchers define small firms in the tourism and hospitality industry in a grounded manner, and many of these researchers take the quantitative approach (Thomas, 2000), for example, small hotels as typically supplying less than 50 bedroom and employing less than 10 people (World Tourism Organization, 2000; cited in Morrison, 1998). In this study, small tourism and hospitality firms (STHFs) are defined as “a firm in the tourism and hospitality industry that employing less than 10 persons”. Some operators start up such businesses for profit or security, while others establish STHFs to suit their lifestyle, locational, and leisure preferences (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000; Getz and Carlsen, 2000). The type of entrepreneurial motivation in tourism and hospitality has been an important topic in the literature, which is normally classified as either business oriented or lifestyle oriented (Shaw, 2014). The motivation to make a living or achieve formal business success can be regarded as business oriented, while the desire to enjoy the beauty of nature or secure a comfortable lifestyle can be classified as lifestyle oriented. Lifestyle-oriented businesses seem to predominate in the tourism sector (Thomas et al., 2011), and are driven by environmental considerations and the desire for a sense of

community (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000). Most significantly, the owners of lifestyle-oriented businesses tend to prioritize personal or family needs and preferences over business growth and profit maximization (Getz and Carlsen, 2005). So far, a majority of the existing literature work on classifying the type of entrepreneurial motivations and describing the characteristics of them (Thomas et al., 2011), little research has focused on the impact of entrepreneurs' social-cultural environment on their motivations for engaging in entrepreneurship (Skokic et al., 2016).

STHFs, such as guest houses, restaurants, cafés/bars, and travel agencies, operate in many tourism destinations in China, particularly in historical/cultural heritage towns such as the Old Town of Lijiang, Dali, and Fenghuang. Township destinations in China are extremely popular among tourists. For example, Lijiang received 35.19 million tourists in 2016 (The Tourism Development Committee of Lijiang, 2017). However, tourism development in such destinations has led to the emergence of new post-modern communities known variously as tourist, recreational, or heritage shopping centers or villages (Mitchell, 1998). Various types of change can be identified in such destinations, such as changes in the tourist market, changes to the small town atmosphere, and changes in business competition.

How do the above changes in the external environment of STHFs affect small firm operators' motivations for conducting business? To

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date, only a few studies have investigated STHFs in relation to their external environment (Thomas et al., 2011). In fact, the investigation of entrepreneurs needs to take account of a broad range of socio-cultural factors and not solely entrepreneurial agency (Skokic et al., 2016). As STHFs are regarded as a useful way of preventing economic leakage, understanding the entrepreneurial motivations of small business operators is important. In particular, increased lifestyle entrepreneurship in a destination creates opportunities for other local businesses, and benefits local society as business owners are more likely to be involved in cultural life and environmental conservation (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011). It has been also suggested that, beyond the managerial skills, the entrepreneur's personal characteristics, such as achievement orientation, correlate with performance (Lerner and Haber, 2000).

Although it has been suggested that, change in the context or the environment is related with STHFs (Russell and Faulkner, 2004), what nature of change is unknown. The current state of knowledge on personal characteristics is similar, that is, there is a lack of understanding of what nature of personal factors affecting STHFs. Therefore, in this study, social cognitive theory (SCT) was used as a theoretical framework for comprehensive investigation of STHF operators' motivations. SCT offers a unique perspective on human behavior as mechanically shaped and controlled by environmental stimuli (Bandura, 1986, 2001). Individuals are understood to set goals that motivate their behavior (Bandura, 1986). SCT provides a useful framework for studying the mechanisms through which personal cognitive and environmental factors interact to explain entrepreneurial intentions (Bacq et al., 2016). SCT was recently introduced to the small tourism business literature by Font et al. (2016), who examined tourism business owners' empathy with the cause of sustainability.

To fill the abovementioned research gap, and building on SCT, this study was guided by the following questions. 1) Comparing the time of this research conducted with the time of business establishing, do the motivations of STHF operators change? 2) What nature of personal and environmental factors respectively influence STHF operators' motivations in an evolving destination? The overall goal of the study was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the motivations of STHF operators in a particular destination and explore the nature of personal and environmental factors which may influence tourism entrepreneurship. Theoretically, its findings contribute to existing work on the uses of SCT in the tourism and hospitality literature and encourage in-depth discussion of the personal and environmental factors that influence operators' entrepreneurial orientation. The practical significance of the study lies in the evidence it provides of how personal and environmental factors shape entrepreneurial behavior in tourism destinations.

2. Literature review

2.1. Entrepreneurial motivations of STHF operators

Tourism entrepreneurship is shaped by smallness, informality and flexibility, distinguishing features derived from several conditions specific to, and shaping, the entrepreneurial tourism environment (Power et al., 2017). By using the push-pull model in investigating motivations for choosing home-stay accommodation businesses in Peninsular Malaysia, Ahmad et al. (2014) identified the pull factors are market potential for home-stay business, having own business, creating extra income, inherited business venture, and retirement preparation, while the push factors are personal satisfaction, enjoyment dealing with people, personal interest, and community encouragement. Based on a sample of 33,711 hotels and restaurants entrepreneurs, Ramos-Rodríguez et al., (2012) found that age, gender, income, perception of opportunities, fear of failure, entrepreneurial ability, knowing other entrepreneurs and being a business angel are explanatory factors of the probability of being an entrepreneur. Gurel et al., (2010) also demonstrated that there is a statistically significant relationship between

innovation, propensity to take risks, entrepreneurial family and entrepreneurial intention.

To date, STHFs have generally been classified based on entrepreneurs' motivation in operating their businesses. For example, Shaw (2014) divided STHFs into business- and lifestyle-oriented firms. In a study conducted in St. Andrews in eastern central Scotland, Glancey and Pettigrew (1997) found that the objectives of small hotel entrepreneurs could be classified as either personal (e.g., providing a livelihood and maintaining a certain quality of life or lifestyle) or business oriented (e.g., building a profitable enterprise, achieving growth, and building a reputation for service quality). In addition to fulfilling lifestyle- and business-oriented objectives, STHFs have been found to provide new livelihood opportunities for local residents (e.g., Andriotis, 2002; Iorio and Corsale, 2010; Tao and Wall, 2009), particularly those in developing countries (e.g., Mbaiwa, 2011). This type of business can be identified as a "necessity business." Studies in this field have emphasized the economic benefits of tourism development, particularly the activities of small tourism firms, in fostering new livelihood strategies for local residents (e.g., Iorio and Corsale, 2010; Mbaiwa, 2011; Tao and Wall, 2009), improving their lifestyles (e.g., Mbaiwa, 2011), and enhancing the community's overall economic development (Andriotis, 2002). Livelihood activities represent economic gain, and lifestyles in this context refer to new income-generating strategies. Therefore, the owners of this type of business seek mainly to earn a living by opening small firms. The businesses' economic success is vital to their owners. In this study, necessity STHFs are treated as business oriented.

It is evident that the type of activity is dependent upon the unique characteristics of the entrepreneur, the prevailing environmental conditions, and the particular stage of the destination's development (Russell and Faulkner, 2004). Also, levels of entrepreneurship are affected by many other factors, such as seasonality, type of tourism business, and family involvement (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011). By exploring the factors that stimulate entrepreneurship among small hotels in a turbulent environment, Skokic et al. (2016) found that institutional deficiencies influence market orientation of the entrepreneurs and that the specific social context sets the conditions by which lifestyle-related motives will exist or not. Further, Wang et al. (2018) study identified a pattern of small tourism business owners' entrepreneurial motivation in different stages of destination development. In addition, in the context of commercial homes, during the commodification process, the host's perceptions of the commercial home undergo a transition from "private home" to "business enterprises", and commodification of goal negatively affects relational authenticity (Ye et al., 2018). Building on the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, Jogaratnam's (2017) empirical study on the independent restaurant industry demonstrated that human capital, market orientation, and entrepreneurial orientation serve as intangible resources that can augment the competitive position, and thereby improve performance.

2.2. Small firms and the external environment

Previous studies have examined the relationship between small and medium-sized enterprises and their external economic (Jogaratnam, 2002), social (Littunen, 2003), political (Ding et al., 2016), and natural environments (Craig and Dibrell, 2006). The external business environment has a particularly important influence on small firms' competitiveness. Casillas et al., (2010) found that the dynamism and hostility of the business environment positively moderated the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the growth of family firms. Also, through a meta-analysis exploring the magnitude of the entrepreneurial orientation-performance relationship, Rauch et al., (2010) supported the notion that entrepreneurial orientation has positive performance implications.

In particular, tourism entrepreneurs are exposed to much greater

risk than entrepreneurs in other industries (Koh & Hatten, 2002; cited in Power et al., 2017). Thus, Getz and Petersen (2005) suggested that research should be conducted on “constrained entrepreneurship” in tourism and hospitality, looking at the influences of culture, gender, sole versus copreneurial ownership, and economic conditions including development policies and the resort life cycle. Additionally, by examining the role of trust in building rural tourism micro firm network engagement, Kelliher et al. (2018) study suggested that bonding, bridging and linking interactions have profound implications for rural tourism micro firms who may not have access to a larger social system of stakeholder relationships due to their relatively isolated location.

Economic, social, and physical changes in the external environment of STHFs may influence not only the businesses themselves (Morrison, 1992) but also the image of the destination, which is valued highly by some business owners (Lai et al., 2017). Dedeker (2017) suggested that the success of a sustainable tourism venture in a protected area is associated with the innovativeness and adaptability of the principal actor. Additionally, changes originating from outside the destination’s core tourism system may threaten the ideal representation ascribed to the area by small tourism firm owners and managers, problematizing this representation and driving thematization, which is essential to the destination’s future image (Lai et al., 2017).

The influence of these various dimensions of the external environment on the performance of small- and medium-sized firms cannot be ignored. Conversely, small firms need not behave only as recipients of environmental change; they can also actively work in and with the environment (Malecki and Tootle, 1996). Kelliher and Henderson (2006) developed a learning framework for the small business environment that acknowledged the learning impact of a small workforce, an owner-centered culture, and a simple organizational structure, as well as the time and resource constraints specific to small businesses. Lai et al. (2017) used the social representations approach to determine how small tourism firms cope with non-tourism induced changes, and suggested that coping is mobilized by perceived threats to the destination’s representation and impeded by feelings of powerlessness, uncertainty, and distrust in the government and/or the industry. In particular, unlike the case in developed countries, where small accommodation businesses are typically established out of “lifestyle” motivations, rural small accommodation businesses in China are mostly profit-oriented businesses, and thus incline to expand their accommodating capacity in response to the increasing rural tourism demand (Ye et al., 2019). Ye et al.’s (2019) research implied that business development and associated commercialization may deteriorate the authenticity of rural lifestyle and host-guest relationship. Nowadays, the number of small accommodation businesses is increasing dramatically in the age of sharing economy, and the ecosystem of the sharing economy is made up of four interrelated subsystems with diverse goal-seeking interest groups residing at different layers (Leung et al., 2019).

2.3. SCT

SCT is based on a model of emergent interactive agency and explains human functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1986). In this model of reciprocal causality, internal personal factors, such as cognitive, affective, and biological events, behavioral patterns, and environmental influences, are interactive determinants that influence each other bidirectionally (Bandura, 2001). SCT defines human behavior as the triadic, dynamic, and reciprocal interactions between personal factors, behaviors, and the environment. Humans’ cognitive processes are influenced by their perceived self-efficacy, perceived outcomes, and perceived expectancy of outcomes within the context of their personal goals, morals, and standards, which in turn mediate whether and how certain behaviors are performed (Hawley et al., 2010).

According to Bandura (2001), by regulating their motivations and activities, people produce experiences that form the functional

neurobiological substrate of their symbolic, social, psychomotor, and other skills. The nature of such experiences depends greatly on the social and physical environments that people select and construct. An agentic perspective contributes to a biopsychosocial understanding of human development, adaptation, and change. SCT suggests that motivations and actions are situationally bound and that individuals are more likely to recognize the moral consequences of actions with greater familiarity or proximity (Kreps & Monin, 2011; cited in Font et al., 2016). SCT has inspired a large and diverse body of research in the field of social psychology and has been used as a conceptual framework to explain various human phenomena, such as academic performance, achievement behavior, career choice, decision making, goal setting and motivation, healthy lifestyle choices, and job performance (Bandura, 1997; cited in McCormick and Martinko, 2004).

The above literature review shows that a comprehensive understanding must be established to examine the entrepreneurial motivation of engaging in STHFs in a changing destination, and to explore what nature of environmental and personal factors may influence tourism entrepreneurship. SCT is applied as the conceptual framework in this study to investigate such issues, as it can explain entrepreneurship intention from the view of internal personal factors and the environmental facilitators.

3. Methods

The design of this study was qualitative, enabling the researcher to develop rich descriptions of how small tourism business operators adapt their motivations for entrepreneurship. The Old Town of Lijiang (hereinafter Lijiang) in China was chosen as the study area for two reasons. First, Lijiang is a typical Chinese historical town and has developed significantly since being listed as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage site in 1997. Thus, small tourism businesses in Lijiang have a relatively long history. Second, many small tourism businesses operate in Lijiang, such as guest houses, cafés/bars, and restaurants. As different types of business encounter different opportunities and constraints, this research focused on only one type of small tourism business, namely, guest houses. The operators of guest houses in Lijiang were interviewed to examine their views on and motivations for entrepreneurship.

Purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to select informants for the in-depth interviews, based on four criteria. First, each informant was required to have run a guest house in Lijiang for at least 5 years (established in or before 2009), because the operators of older establishments were expected to provide more useful information for the purposes of this study. In addition, the number of tourists in Lijiang has increased rapidly since 2010, and the destination has evolved significantly. Both the number and the scale of entrepreneurship investments in Lijiang have also grown since 2010. Second, each informant’s guest house was required to have had fewer than 10 employees at its opening. Third, to gain a full picture of the research problem, as many small business owners in well-developed Chinese destinations are non-locals, the participants were permitted to be either local residents or immigrants as long as they had been living in Lijiang while running their businesses. Fourth, each informant’s attitude toward running a guest house at its opening and at the time of the study was required to be either lifestyle oriented or business oriented, signifying that the informant had a primary objective for owning a guest house. Twenty-four guest house operators were recruited as informants. Information on the final demographic profile is presented in Table 1.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, steps were taken to safeguard its credibility, transferability, and dependability, based on the criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). First, data triangulation was applied in the data collection process. The researcher sought informants from across Lijiang to avoid potential location-related bias, and included both local and non-local business operators to ensure that the information gained was comprehensive. Second, the

Table 1
Profile of informants.

No.	Age/ age group	Gender	Origin (local or non-local)	Year of guest house opening	Room capacity at opening	Number of employees at opening
#1	30	M	Non-local	2009	23	2
#2	56-65	M	Local	2005	14	1
#3	46-55	M	Local	2005	10	1
#4	46-55	M	Local	2001	10	1
#5	50	M	Local	2003	20	2
#6	28	F	Non-local	2005	10	1
#7	30	M	Non-local	2008	13	N/A
#8	56-65	M	Local	1998	16	1
#9	51	M	Non-local	2007	7	0
#10	34	F	Non-local	2009	8	1
#11	46-55	M	Non-local	2008	11	2
#12	56-65	M	Non-local	2002	24	1
#13	50	F	Non-local	2003	7	1
#14	34	F	Non-local	2007	14	1
#15	28	M	Non-local	2009	12	N/A
#16	45-50	F	Non-local	2007	6	1
#17	25	F	Non-local	2007	10	2
#18	35	M	Non-local	2009	6	2
#19	30-35	F	Non-local	2009	6	N/A
#20	36-45	M	Non-local	2007	6	0
#21	33	F	Non-local	2009	6	1
#22	50	M	Local	2006	8	0
#23	37	M	Non-local	2007	14	N/A
#24	35	M	Local	1998	6	1

Note: N/A indicates missing information.

data analysis began as soon as the first in-depth interview had been conducted. The results of this initial data analysis helped to refine the interview guide for the following in-depth interviews. Third, empirical evidence on key aspects of the study, such as data collection methods and the informants' socio-demographic information, was collated to increase the transferability of the findings.

In order to answer the research questions, the interview questions, such as, "Why did you invest a guest house in Lijiang?", "What is your present goal in operating a guest house?", and "Do you change your motivation in operating a guest house? And why?" were asked firstly. Also, guided by SCT, the following two questions – "Is there any personal factor leading you to change (or maintain) your motivation?" and "Is there any environmental reason for a change in (or maintenance of) your motivation?" were specifically asked. Each interview was conducted in the courtyard of the informant's guest house and lasted for about an hour. Informed consent and permission to record the interviews were obtained from the interviewees. Notes were taken during the interviews to record meaningful observations and avoid information loss. The in-depth interviews were conducted in Chinese, as the researcher and the informants are all Chinese. Audio recordings of the in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim, and then the transcriptions were translated into English for data analysis.

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the interview data. Inductive coding was conducted by directly reading the data, accompanied by deductive coding deriving from the conceptual framework (Hennink et al., 2011). The qualitative data analysis software package Nvivo 10 was used to facilitate the management of transcriptions and the coding process. A three-step analytical process was undertaken. The aim of Step 1 was to gain an in-depth understanding of the informants' original motives for investing guest houses and their present attitudes toward running businesses. By comparing each informant's initial motivation to establish a guest house with his/her attitude toward running the business during the study period, different patterns in motivation (change or maintenance) were identified to provide meaningful insights into Research Question 1. The extent of each entrepreneur's lifestyle vs. business orientation was identified through inductive coding (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Next, the 24 informants were categorized into 4

groups according to their motivation patterns.

The aim of Step 2 was to answer Research Question 2 by identifying the personal and environmental factors that affected the informants' motivations. The analytic procedures proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, were used to closely examine the interview data collected from each group of informants. During opening coding, the unit of analysis was either a sentence or a paragraph depending on the content of the transcription. To develop the inductive codes in this study, the researcher read all the transcriptions word-by-word, annotated the data, noted the repetitions, identified the topic changes, and explored the underlying concepts. Then, this study used axial coding to categorize the first-order codes into broader second-order categories (Altinay et al., 2014). For example, in group 1 (informants who shifted in motivation from lifestyle orientation to business orientation), data-coded "perception of business opportunity" and "benefits of accumulating resources and experience on the job" were categorized as "cognitive beliefs". Further, the second-order categories were gathered into aggregate themes (Altinay et al., 2014). For instance, in group 1 (informants who shifted in motivation from lifestyle orientation to business orientation), categories "cognitive beliefs", "intrinsic needs", and "demographic factors" were gathered as "personal factors". Two themes of factors influencing the informants' motivations, namely personal factors and environmental facilitators, were identified in each group.

The aim of Step 3 was to develop a comprehensive model of the small tourism business operators' attitudes using SCT. Selective coding was used to refine the categories, build a "story" that connected the categories, and establish a discursive set of theoretical propositions (Creswell, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Viewing the whole picture enabled the attributes of all of the informants in the four groups to be reviewed and the categories reconsidered. Consequently, the category of changes in business demand was merged with the category of changes in the tourism market.

4. Findings

Four patterns of entrepreneurial motivations were identified from the 24 informants, namely a shift from a lifestyle orientation to a business orientation (3 cases), maintenance of a lifestyle orientation (7 cases), a shift from a business orientation to a lifestyle orientation (4 cases), and maintenance of a business orientation (10 cases) (Table 2). This section presents the results based on these four patterns.

4.1. Pattern 1: shift in motivation from lifestyle orientation to business orientation

Of the 24 interviewees, 3 (#1, #18, and #19) reported a shift in entrepreneurial motivation from lifestyle oriented to business oriented. These three informants were all non-local and had opened guest houses in Lijiang in 2009. They cited lifestyle-oriented motives for establishing their guest houses, such as the desire for a change, a more relaxed and comfortable environment, and an alternative lifestyle. The desire for a new lifestyle was crucial to these informants' lifestyle decisions, particularly for those who were dissatisfied with emotional aspects of their original lifestyles. On arriving in Lijiang as tourists, the three informants had found its residents to live more appealing lives than their own. Thus, they decided to remain in Lijiang and open guest houses with their savings, embarking on a new career and a new life. For example, Informant #19 reported as follows.

"I first visited Lijiang in 2007, and gained a very good feeling about the place. Two years later, I quit my job, sold my apartment in Beijing, and moved to Lijiang. At that time, I did not like my life in Beijing... I had the same routine every day, and my life had become extremely boring. In Lijiang, the pace of life is extremely slow, but people here live more comfortable and authentic lives."

Table 2
Patterns of entrepreneurial motivations.

Pattern	Shift from lifestyle to business orientation	Maintenance of lifestyle orientation	Shift from business to lifestyle orientation	Maintenance of business orientation
Sample Original motivation	3 Lifestyle ● Looking for a change ● Seeking relaxation and a comfortable environment ● Seeking an alternative lifestyle	7 Lifestyle ● Looking for a change ● Seeking relaxation and a comfortable environment ● Seeking an alternative lifestyle ● The desire for an easier life	4 Business ● To make a living ● To make more money ● To develop social capital	10 Business ● To make a living ● To make more money ● To develop social capital ● To gain a sense of achievement
Present motivation	Business ● To make more money	Lifestyle ● Seeking to meet more people and make friends ● The desire for an easy life ● Seeking an alternative lifestyle	Lifestyle ● Seeking to meet more people and make friends ● The desire for an easy life ● Seeking an alternative lifestyle	Business
Personal factors leading to a shift in motivation or a maintenance of motivation	Cognitive beliefs ● Perception of business opportunity ● Benefits of accumulating resources and experience on the job Intrinsic needs ● Decreasing sense of novelty ● Altered perception of the local setting Demographic factors ● Family status	Cognitive beliefs ● Interpretation of commercialization as inevitable and rational ● Limited profit-making opportunities ● Business requiring excessive work Intrinsic needs ● Not driven by the desire to make more money	Cognitive beliefs ● Difficulty in expanding business ● Stable accumulation of financial sources Intrinsic needs ● Desire to enjoy a comfortable life ● Desire to enjoy a simple life ● Being trapped in comfort zone Demographic factors ● Family status	Cognitive beliefs ● Perception of business opportunity Intrinsic needs ● Increased material desires
Environmental facilitators leading to a shift in motivation or a maintenance of motivation	Changes in tourist market ● Changes in tourists' needs Changes in industry ● Market saturation ● Fierce business competition ● High business cost Changes in local setting ● Pollution ● Commercialization ● Social and cultural changes	Business demand ● Increasing number of tourists ● High tourist revisit rate	Changes in industry ● High cost of expanding business Business demand ● High tourist revisit rate	Changes in tourist market ● Changes in tourists' needs Changes in industry ● Market saturation ● Fierce business competition ● High business cost Changes in local setting ● Commercialization

These informants enjoyed living in Lijiang despite the area's economic problems, especially as some had sources of income additional to their guest houses. They were self-employed and had business partners, allowing them to stay in Lijiang for most of the time and operate their guest houses by themselves. Informant #1, who came from Dali in Yunnan Province, described this situation as follows.

“I also have another business. I sell tea, from which I actually earn more. I began selling tea many years ago, so I don't need to pay much attention to it. This gives me the flexibility to stay here and operate this guest house.”

However, when asked whether their entrepreneurial motivations had changed and to describe their present goals, the aforementioned informants reported that their current attitudes were predominantly business oriented. Informants #1 and #18 had expanded their guest house businesses in Lijiang; Informant #19 had not done so because he did not have a suitable house. The informants cited the desire to make more money as their specific business-oriented goal in owning a guest house. For instance, Informant #1 reported as follows.

“It is easy to make money from guest houses. Because of my extensive experience in this business area, I can check room sales using my mobile phone and manage the guest house even when I am not in Lijiang.”

The following personal factors and environmental facilitators were identified as responsible for this shift in the informants' entrepreneurial motivation.

4.1.1. Personal factors

Three categories of personal factors were identified. The first category comprised the cognitive beliefs of the guest house operators in Lijiang, particularly their perceptions of their businesses and the benefits of the resources and experience accumulated on the job. More specifically, the informants were asked to indicate their cognitive beliefs about business demand and their cognitive beliefs about the benefits of the experience they had gained and the customers and financial resources they had accumulated while operating guest houses in Lijiang.

The second category comprised the personal intrinsic needs of the operators, reflecting affective aspects such as a reduced sense of novelty and altered perceptions of Lijiang itself. “Sense of novelty” here refers to the perceived freshness of the experience of operating a guest house. Informant #1 explicitly described a waning sense of novelty, as follows.

“I opened my guest house here just for fun, especially as it allowed me to meet and talk with beautiful women. But now the novelty is gone.”

Along with a reduced sense of novelty and changes in their business environment, the informants' perceptions of Lijiang had changed over time. Their initially positive perception of Lijiang as conducive to a simple and comfortable life was one of the most important reasons for their decision to settle down in Lijiang and open a guest house. However, with the rapid development of local tourism, several operators experienced changes in their perceptions of the business environment. Informant #19's response was representative.

“Lijiang was once a simple and cozy place. That's why I moved here from Beijing. But now it is totally different.”

Third, personal demographic factors, especially family status, affected the operators' motivations for owning a guest house. For instance, Informant #19, who had moved to Lijiang from Beijing in 2009 and was married and 7 months' pregnant at the time of the interview, described her situation as follows.

“I am married and have been pregnant for 7 months. I need to consider my baby, and I want to give my baby a better life. I plan to

buy an apartment in Lijiang New Town.”

4.1.2. Environmental facilitators

The environmental facilitators responsible for the shift in motivation of these three informants from lifestyle oriented to business oriented were classified into three categories: changes in the tourism market, changes in the guest house industry, and changes in the local setting. First, backpackers had given way to mass tourism in recent years, and tourists' accommodation needs had changed accordingly. According to Informant #1, “more customers today ask for modern and high-quality facilities even though they are not always environmentally friendly.”

Second, the operators' motivations were influenced by changes in the guest house industry, such as an increasing number of guest houses, fierce business competition, and high business costs (especially rent). The accommodation sector in Lijiang had changed in line with the town's tourism development. More and more guest houses had been expanded from traditional Nakhi courtyards, intensifying business competition between guest house operators. The cost of operating the guest houses had also significantly increased due to rising house rental prices. Local government policy mandates that non-local residents can only rent houses in Lijiang, not buy them. Informant #19 summarized the disadvantages of this situation as follows: “the increase in rent is too high to bear; we cannot simply work to fund the owners of our houses.”

Third, tourism development has changed Lijiang by increasing pollution and commercialization and prompting other social and cultural changes. These changes had affected the attitudes of the three abovementioned informants toward doing business. For example, Informant #19 described local residents' eagerness to make money as follows.

“The local people no longer lead such simple lives. House rent has been increasing for the last few years. Some house owners set particularly unfair rental prices.”

4.2. Pattern 2: maintenance of lifestyle orientation

The informants in this group (Informants #7, #9, #10, #14, #16, #21, and #22) operated their guest houses with a limited room capacity and only a few or even no employees. Of these informants, only Informant #22, who opened his guest house in 2006, was a local resident; the rest were non-local. The reasons for their decision to open guest houses in Lijiang were similar to those cited by the participants displaying Pattern 1. However, the seven abovementioned informants also cited the desire to live an easy life as a reason for their involvement in the guest house business. This reason was to some extent similar to the desire for a new lifestyle, but specifically emphasized the pursuit and enjoyment of an easy lifestyle in Lijiang. Informant #21 described this motive as follows.

“My wife and I used to work in Shenzhen, which is one of China's first-tier cities. We were both working for advertising companies, so our work stress was extremely high. My wife visited Lijiang with her colleagues and found it to be a good place, so we settled here and opened this guest house.”

These informants had maintained their lifestyle orientation since opening their guest houses. They cited some personal and external environmental factors that had helped them to maintain their dream lifestyle in Lijiang.

4.2.1. Personal factors

The personal factors responsible for the maintenance of the informants' lifestyle orientation comprised situated cognitive beliefs and intrinsic needs. For example, Informants #10, #14, #16, and #22 held the situated cognitive belief that commercialization inevitably and

rationally accompanies tourism development. With Lijiang's enormous growth, these informants felt better able to enjoy their lives in their guest houses, as noted by Informant #10.

"In fact, our lives have been made more convenient by commercialization. Social development has resulted in the arrival of more tourists and thus more customers for us. Commercialization is prevalent in most old towns in China. Lijiang is better than other old towns, and it is big enough for me to find my own personal place."

Another cognitive belief reported by these informants was that owning a guest house offered limited profit-making opportunities. As Informant #14 noted, "the capacity of the guest house business is limited: you cannot earn a lot, regardless of how much you have upgraded your guest house." These informants wished to spend most of their time enjoying their lives rather than achieving formal business success through running guest houses.

Informants #10 and #16 said that the work involved in operating a guest house made excessive claims on their time and energy. Thus, they chose to continue operating their guest houses without expending additional effort, as long as they were enjoying relatively comfortable lives. Informant #10, who had lived in Lijiang since 2009, opened her second guest house in 2010, but closed it down after a few months because of the exhausting work involved in running the two businesses.

In addition to their situated cognitive beliefs, the guest house operators' intrinsic needs, such as their relative lack of eagerness to earn money, contributed to their lifestyle orientation. For instance, Informant #14 reported that she was not very aggressive in managing her guest house.

4.2.2. Environmental facilitators

Although some personal factors contributed to the guest house operators' lifestyle-oriented attitude toward conducting business in Lijiang, the influence of external factors cannot be ignored. Environmental facilitators were found to include the high business demand created by the increasing number of tourists and repeat guests in Lijiang. Although the competition between guest houses has grown fiercer as the industry continues to develop, operating a guest house in Lijiang to make one's living is not difficult, because the number of tourists in the town is steadily increasing. Therefore, the business demand for these guest houses had remained high, as explained by Informant #10: "although business competition is becoming fiercer, I have retained my profit margin."

Among the distinctive characteristics of Lijiang's tourism industry is a relatively high revisit rate, which results in a high rate of return to guest houses. According to Informant #22, "Lijiang is magical. Many visitors fall in love with the place and make repeated return visits." Therefore, the guest house operators in Lijiang had many customer resources and could enjoy their lives in the town while simultaneously managing their businesses.

4.3. Pattern 3: shift in motivation from business orientation to lifestyle orientation

Informants #6, #13, #20, and #23 described opening their guest houses for business-oriented motives, which were later replaced by lifestyle-oriented motives. All of the informants in this group were non-local, but had lived in Lijiang for 8 years or more. These informants cited business-oriented goals, such as making a living, making more money, and developing social capital, when asked why they had started guest house businesses in Lijiang. The desire to make a living was an important contributor. Due to the town's numerous visitors, especially during peak seasons, its accommodation facilities had become limited several years earlier. Therefore, the demand for accommodation in Lijiang was considerable, and owning a guest house presented an excellent income-generating opportunity. This led people with a relatively keen business sense, whether local or non-local, to invest in guest

houses in Lijiang. The desire to make more money was reported along with the goal of making a living, but the former emphasized the pursuit of remuneration beyond mere livelihood needs. The operators who cited this motive tended to be more ambitious, and most were outsiders who had traveled to Lijiang as tourists and realized that operating a guest house in the town could bring them great benefits. Informant #23 reported, "I visited Lijiang in 2007 and found many business opportunities."

Interestingly, the desire to develop social capital, which increases the likelihood of profits in the future, was also cited as a reason for opening a guest house. Running a guest house business affords numerous opportunities for interpersonal communication. In this case, owning a guest house provided the hosts with many opportunities to develop personal relationships with their customers. Informant #20, who had previously studied in Germany but returned to China in 2006, reported as follows.

"My original motive in opening this guest house was to get to know other people who could bring me intangible benefits."

These informants also agreed that their initial attitudes toward owning guest houses had changed after running their businesses for some time. Such change was reflected in their lifestyle orientation during the study period. They enjoyed meeting other people, making friends, living comfortable lives, and adopting alternative lifestyles. First, as a specialist form of accommodation, a guest house enables its operator to meet a range of people. Second, although guest houses can be run to maintain one's livelihood, owning a guest house is a relatively stress-free job. This was especially true for the operators who had opened their guest houses several years earlier, when house rent was low. Thus, these informants cited the desire to enjoy an easy life as one of their main motives for owning a guest house. Third, after earning back the cost of opening a guest house and/or accumulating other economic resources over time, the guest house operators in Lijiang had begun to view their businesses as offering an alternative lifestyle. Informant #20's case was typical.

"I have considerable social capital already, and I run other businesses in Guangzhou. So I do not care how much money I make by operating guest houses in Lijiang. I just enjoy my life here."

The informants also cited the following personal and external factors when explaining the reasons for their shift in motivation from a business orientation to a lifestyle orientation.

4.3.1. Personal factors

The informants' personal reasons for this shift in motivation can be divided into situated cognitive beliefs, intrinsic needs, and demographic factors. Their key cognitive beliefs were that expanding their businesses would prove difficult and that they had already accumulated ample economic resources. The informants believed that growing guest house businesses in Lijiang was no longer easy due to high house rents and the many tasks involved in operating a guest house. Therefore, they focused on enjoying their lives rather than seeking greater economic benefits, as indicated by Informant #6.

"Expanding a guest house business has become difficult in the past 2 years, as the annual house rent is now at least RMB200,000."

As accommodation in Lijiang remains in demand, operating guest houses can provide a steady stream of economic resources for operators. Several of the above informants chose not to focus on business issues, instead changing their attitudes to enable them to enjoy their lives. According to Informant #13, "even if the operator is lazy, the cost of operating a guest house can be earned back during the peak seasons (summer vacations)."

In terms of intrinsic needs, the informants reported their desire to enjoy a comfortable life, to live in a simpler environment, and to remain within or escape their comfort zone. All four informants described

running a guest house in Lijiang as a comfortable, low-pressure job offering a large amount of free time. This realization had ultimately changed their attitudes. Informant #13, who had initially settled in Lijiang to make money, described this change as follows.

“It is easy to operate a guest house. I can wake up any time I want to, and I have all the time that I need.”

Informants #13 and #20 cited the simple life on offer in Lijiang as a reason for their shift in motivation from a business to a lifestyle orientation. Complex personal relationships and attendant problems arise in almost every working environment today, but are far less prevalent in the guest house industry. This is among the many advantages of running small-scale accommodation. Some of the operators also focused on enjoying comfortable lives over gaining economic benefits because they wanted to stay in their comfort zone. Lijiang is known for its comfortable environment, and people who live here tend to become too comfortable. Informant #23 offered the following explanation.

“The pace of life in Lijiang is slow. People become lazy if they stay here for a long time. Nowadays, I don’t even pay attention to my business.”

With regard to demographic factors, Informant #6 cited family status as a contributor to her shift from a business-oriented to a lifestyle-oriented motivation. This informant, who opened her guest house in 2005 and had two children of 3 years and 6 years old at the time of interview, reported that “my children are still young, so owning a guest house is suitable for me. It gives me more time to take care of them.”

4.3.2. Environmental facilitators

Two environmental factors were identified, namely the high cost of expanding a guest house business and the large number of repeat guests. First, all of the four informants in this group were non-locals, and were thus permitted only to rent houses in Lijiang. However, as house rent in Lijiang had dramatically increased, investing in another guest house had become an expensive endeavor. Acknowledging this obstacle, several operators abandoned their entrepreneurial ambitions and simply focused on enjoying their existing lifestyle.

Second, Lijiang is known for its relatively high tourist revisit rate. Therefore, the likelihood of customers’ returning to guest houses is also relatively high. According to Informant #6, “many visitors come to Lijiang repeatedly. Indeed, almost 20% of the guests who stay at my guest house are repeat customers.” Guest houses that have been operating for a long time may attract more potential customers as a result of word-of-mouth advertising. In this group, Informants #6 and #13 had operated guest houses in Lijiang for more than 10 years, and the other two informants (#20 and #23) had run their businesses for 8 years. Therefore, the demand for guest houses had clearly remained high, and the operators did not feel pressured to compete. They thus chose to enjoy their lives rather than committing solely to managing their businesses.

4.4. Pattern 4: maintaining of business orientation

Of the 24 interviewees, 10 (Informants #2, #3, #4, #5, #8, #11, #12, #15, #17, and #24) had opened their guest houses in Lijiang for business-oriented reasons, and had since maintained this business orientation. Informants #2, #3, #4, #5, #8, and #24 were local residents who had run guest houses in Lijiang for more than 10 years; Informants #11, #12, #15, and #17 were non-locals. Informants #5, #11, and #15 had expanded their guest house businesses in Lijiang. Four goals categorized as business oriented were identified: to make more money, to make a living, to develop social capital, and to gain a sense of achievement. The meanings and roles of making more money, making a living, and developing social capital were similar to those of the goals reported by the informants whose motivations had changed from business oriented to lifestyle oriented. Interestingly, some of the

informants had started their businesses solely as a means of achievement. For instance, Informant #15 reported that his business-oriented attitude toward owning a guest house in Lijiang had been inspired by the desire to gain a sense of personal achievement.

From the informants’ conversations about their businesses and personal lives in Lijiang, two categories of personal factors and three categories of environmental factors helping to maintain their business orientation were identified.

4.4.1. Personal factors

The informants’ cognitive beliefs about and perceptions of business significantly affected their business motivation. They believed that accommodation in Lijiang was still in demand, leading them to buy or expand guest houses in Lijiang. For example, Informant #24, a local resident in Lijiang who had owned a guest house since 1998, stated that “the rate of return on investment on a guest house in Lijiang is high.”

These operators also reported experiencing greater material desires as a result of running guest houses. For example, Informant #5, a local resident who opened his first guest house in 2003, became more desirous of material wealth as he encountered more visitors to the guest house.

“In the old days, I only wanted to make a living for my family. But since meeting more people, I have changed. I now want to have a beautiful house, own a car, and travel.”

4.4.2. Environmental facilitators

The environmental factors affecting the informants’ business motivations fell into three main categories: changes in the tourism market, changes in the guest house industry, and changes in the local setting. The factors categorized under tourism changes and industry changes were similar in nature and function to the attributes identified as driving a change in motivation from lifestyle oriented to business oriented. Notably, commercialization was reported under changes in local setting. As a place becomes more commercialized, more challenges emerge in its business environment. Accordingly, the commercialization of Lijiang had driven the four informants to maintain their business orientation in operating their guest houses.

5. Discussion

Most of the studies in hospitality have focused on the importance of small firms in the job creation and regional economic impact and the relationship between firms’ sizes, survival, and constraints on firm growth, and a small number of studies have also examined entrepreneurial behavior and activities in hospitality field (Gursoy et al., 2017). In terms of entrepreneurial motivations, a number of studies focused on describing and classifying the types of motivations of being involved in tourism entrepreneurship at beginning, and most of the existing research neglected the impact of the changing external social-economic environment on the initial motives (Skokic et al., 2016). However, entrepreneurship should be viewed as a process-based perspective involving a highly interrelated set of creative, strategic, and organizing processes (Moroz and Hindle, 2012). To fill in the research gap, the current research regards STHF operators’ motivations from a changing perspective, and the results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of STHF operators’ motivations for entrepreneurship. As presented in Fig. 1, an entrepreneur’s motivation is influenced by personal cognitive and other factors and environmental facilitators. As destinations are always evolving and personal factors may change over time, an operator’s entrepreneurial motivation may either be maintained as lifestyle oriented or business oriented, or switch from one to the other. These processes of maintenance and change are based on learning undertaken, experiences gained, and adjustments made in working and living contexts.

It was often generally argued that the macro-environment mix

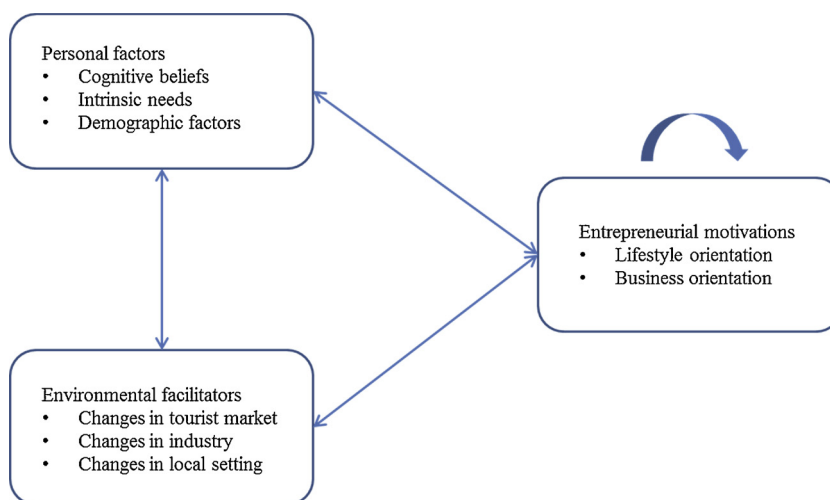


Fig. 1. A model of small business operators' motivations for entrepreneurship.

influences not only a person's personal characteristics but also this person's entrepreneurial process (e.g., [Chen and Elston, 2013](#)). However, there is a lack of empirical research on investigating such issue and indicating the nature of environmental and personal factors which affects tourism entrepreneurship. Guided by SCT, the personal factors and environmental facilitators that influenced the STHF operators' entrepreneurial motivations were identified from the qualitative data. The personal factors comprised cognitive beliefs, intrinsic needs, and demographic factors. Different from the existing knowledge on personal factors affecting entrepreneurship processes, which often emphasized entrepreneurs' background characteristics such as wealth and educational level (e.g., [Lofstrom et al., 2014](#)), this study found not only background factors (i.e., demographic) but also personal cognitive beliefs and intrinsic needs. The entrepreneurs' cognitive beliefs ranged from cognition of their external living environment to cognition of the industry and the self. For example, regarding the external social-economic environment, several business operators considered commercialization to be a reasonable corollary of the town's economic development, whereas others regarded it negatively. This difference may have further influenced the operators' perceptions of their local setting. Indeed, the commodification process transforms the commercial home, alienates the host families from the home setting and catering activities, causes standardization of an accommodation, and strengthens the motivation for profits ([Ye et al., 2018](#)). The entrepreneurs also reported cognitive beliefs about the industry. Several operators believed that business opportunities were still available in Lijiang's guest house sector, and that this type of business was a stable economic source. However, others reported that the profit-making opportunities afforded by owning a guest house were limited, and that expanding a guest house business was difficult due to prohibitively high costs. Most of the informants had originally expected running a guest house to be an easy job. However, after doing this job for several years, some found that the amount of work involved had diminished their enthusiasm for the business. Others recognized the need to make better use of the resources and experience they had gained on the job. In particular, in the age of sharing economy, with the assistance of modern technology, business providers can be easily connected to consumers by platforms ([Leung et al., 2019](#)). In addition, previous studies on entrepreneurial learning highlighted the importance of experience and prior knowledge to entrepreneurial success, and experiential learning should be explained as a dynamic and self-regulated process that relies on planning, monitoring, and self-reflection ([Fust et al., 2018](#)).

Second, similar to cognitive beliefs, intrinsic needs shape an individual's ongoing efforts to identify and overcome challenges ([Deci and Ryan, 1985](#)). [Jaafar et al., \(2011\)](#) proved the relative unimportance

of education and knowledge related to the industry in supporting the survivability of small and medium hotel operators, but highlighted the most important characteristics required of the owners/managers in this sector – self-confidence and interest. Previous studies also demonstrated the influence of values and religion on individuals' entrepreneurship behaviors ([Gursoy et al., 2017](#)). This research discovered the relevant ego-intrinsic needs including a reduced sense of novelty, an altered perception of the local setting, a focus (or not) on making money, the desire to retain a comfortable or simple living environment, the desire to remain within or escape a comfort zone, and increased material desires. Interestingly, for some of the informants, the novelty of being a guest house operator had disappeared over time, whereas the other informants continued to experience running a guest house as an enjoyable endeavor that allowed them to live comfortable lives in a simple environment. After living in Lijiang for several years, some of the operators had adjusted their perceptions of the place or become used to the town. Additionally, as the tourism industry provides many opportunities for host-guest interaction, local entrepreneurs in a less developed destination may develop more material desires after meeting tourists, as reported by some of the informants in this study.

Third, in addition to coping with challenges arising from their external social-economic environment, entrepreneurs may need to adapt based on their own needs and those of their families ([Schein, 1978](#)). Previous studies of small-scale accommodation have identified some demographic factors that play significant roles in this sector, such as gender, age, and life cycle (e.g., [Lynch, 2005](#); [Goffee and Scase, 1985](#); [Morrison et al., 2001](#)). Previous studies have neglected to consider the family backgrounds of individuals who are tolerant to uncertainty, have need for achievement with an internal locus of control and are willing to take risks to start up a business ([Altinay et al., 2012](#)). [Marchant and Mottiar \(2011\)](#) research on surf tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs in Ireland found that the entrepreneur changed individual motivation and expanded the business in order to provide for a family. While, [Chrisman et al. \(2012\)](#) study on small family firms in general (including retail, service, manufacturing and other industries) indicated that family involvement and family essence influenced the adoption of family-centered non-economic goals. In this study, family status was found to change the motivation of some of the operators for conducting business in both two directions, from lifestyle to business orientation and from business to lifestyle orientation.

The environmental facilitators were categorized as changes in the tourism market, changes in the guest house industry, and changes in the local setting. First, the increasing number of visitors to Lijiang had increased the demand for STHFs, prompting changes in the entrepreneurs' perceptions of their business environment. [Getz and](#)

Petersen (2005) pointed that resort life-cycle stage and seasonality might have an impact on entrepreneurial opportunities and behavior. Ye et al.'s (2019) study on small accommodation business growth in rural areas of China suggested that the initial rural "home" become a profit-oriented organization fully devoted to satisfying market needs. The importance of changes in tourist types and tourists' needs as a destination evolves has also been well documented in the literature. Plog's psychographic profile of visitors (2001) indicated that the needs of tourists change as the number of visitors increases. This observation was confirmed by the findings of the current study, in which tourists' need for small-scale accommodation was found to have changed. In the old days, "venturers" did not care much about the facilities at a destination. Nowadays, more "centric-dependable" or "near-dependable" visitors prefer to stay in guest houses with modern, standardized facilities. Such findings confirm Russell and Faulkner's (2004) argument that change in the context has been driven by a myriad of socio-economic and technological factors that have influenced both market trends and the methods of satisfying consumer demand.

Second, the findings showed several points of consistency with Butler's argument (1980) regarding changes in the accommodation sector as a tourism destination evolves. Since Lijiang entered its developmental stage, the number of guest houses has steadily increased, with most owned by outsiders rather than local residents. As a result of the overflow of the industry, business competition has become fierce. Bosworth and Farrell's (2011) study on the in-migrant owners of small tourism firms in Northumberland also found such owners heighten competition and raise standards and aspirations among all small tourism firms. Meanwhile, increasing house rent, which was the most important expense for the non-local guest house operators, further influenced the entrepreneurs' motivations. Ye et al.'s (2018) study on commercial homes suggested that the entrepreneurs should be careful in maintaining authenticity while developing their commercial homes, as commodification could lead to the loss of cognitive and relational authenticity. Thus, innovation and creative practices will be of huge implications in the sharing economy where more and more commercial homes have entered (or are about to enter) the tourism and hospitality industry (Ye et al., 2018).

Third, changes in place were found to be significant. Place is a socially constructed idea that adds value to mere space and renders it dynamic (McKercher et al., 2015). In the current study, with Lijiang's tourism development, changes in place were noted in physical (e.g., pollution), economic (e.g., commercialization), and social and cultural (e.g., perceived sophistication of residents) dimensions. These changes affected not only the entrepreneurs' affective cognition but also their motivations for conducting business, as the destination served as both their working and their living environment. In particular, the lifestyle motivations of some of the operators were driven by their awareness of the local environment and emphasis on a sense of community (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000). Therefore, the effect of changes in place on the operators' motivations was more obvious in Pattern 1 (a shift from lifestyle oriented to business oriented motivations).

6. Conclusions and limitations

This study investigated the entrepreneurial motivations of STHF operators from a dynamic perspective and identified four patterns of motivation: a shift from a lifestyle orientation to a business orientation; maintenance of a lifestyle orientation; a shift from a business orientation to a lifestyle orientation; and maintenance of a business orientation. Using Bandura's (1986) SCT approach, the research revealed distinct personal and environmental factors affecting entrepreneurial motivation for each pattern. Building on SCT, the study thus provided a comprehensive model of the motivations for entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Theoretically, in contrast with most studies investigating the start-up motives of entrepreneurs (Skokic et al., 2016), this study provided a

dynamic understanding of the entrepreneurial motivations of STHF operators by comparing their original motives with the present ones. As entrepreneurship is a process that occurs over time and should be viewed as dynamic rather than static (Chen and Elston, 2013). Second, although studies of small business owners have indicated that changes in their personal lives or environment may alter their motivations for conducting business (Dewhurst and Horobin, 1998; Walker and Brown, 2004), the nature of such personal and environmental factors has not been identified. Guided by SCT, this study filled this research gap, offering new and in-depth insights into STHFs. Third, this study newly introduced SCT in the research of tourism entrepreneurship, as the research on small firms in tourism has been marginal to mainstream studies of small businesses (Thomas et al., 2011).

Practically, this study found several constrains for lifestyle STHFs over time as a tourism destination evolves, such as market trends, competition and local setting. Many positive impacts of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship, including creating opportunities for other local businesses, offering the potential for increased employment opportunities and local economic diversification, and benefiting local society in cultural life and environmental conservation, have been identified (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011). So that, from a policy perspective, this research suggests that policy makers could set up a range of policy mechanisms, including business support and community development, to assist the sustainable development of lifestyle STHFs.

However, this study—like any other research—has certain limitations. First, due to the study's exploratory design, the data were collected mainly through in-depth interviews with a small sample of operators whose motivations had changed or been retained. This limitation may prevent a full understanding of why the entrepreneurs' motivations had changed. Second, only a single setting, Lijiang, a famous Chinese historical town, was investigated. Destinations differ considerably in their economic and social characteristics, creating very different conditions for STHFs. Therefore, the external factors that influence entrepreneurial motivations may also differ between destinations. Third, instead of adopting a longitudinal research design, this study investigated the informants' initial and present entrepreneurial motivations and determined whether and how these motivations had changed.

Thus, there are at least three avenues for the future research. First, future work could use other research methods to verify the results of this study. Second, future research could be conducted in other settings to explore if there is any other nature of environmental factors affecting entrepreneurial motivations. Lastly, a longitudinal research design is highly recommended to obtain a more deep understanding of the development of STHFs with the external environment.

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